

Christian Preaching, and Ministerial Service.

Considered in a

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S E R M O N

Preached at

St. Ives, in Huntingdonshire,

AT THE

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN JENNINGS,

A U G U S T 12, 1742.

By DAVID JENNINGS.

To which is added,

A C H A R G E

Delivered on the same Occasion.

By F. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

*Published at the Desire of the Church; and the
Ministers that beare them.*

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A

S E R M O N

Preached at the

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN JENNINGS.

2 COR. IV. 5.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake.



HIS Epistle was wrote by the Apostle *Paul* to the Church of *Corinth*, in his own Name, and in the Name of *Timothy* his Brother, as he calls him, ver. 1. Therefore he generally uses the Plural personal *We* and *Our*; as, *We are Ambassadors for Christ,*

Christ, and not only *I*, who am an Apostle. (From whence, by the way, it appears, that the Character of *Ambassadors* for *Christ* belongs to ordinary Ministers, such as *Timothy* was, as well as to *Apostles*;) and so in our Text, *WE preach not ourselves*.

IN the third Verse of this Chapter, the Apostle, having Occasion to speak of the Gospel, calls it *Our Gospel*. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost*; yet in the next Verse, having Occasion to speak of it again, he calls it, *the glorious Gospel of Christ*: And that none might mistake his Meaning, when he says *Our Gospel*, as if *this Apostle*, and *Timothy*, pretended to be the Contrivers and Authors of it, he adds the Words which I have now read for my Text; which may be thus connected with the foregoing—*lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine upon them*, the *Gospel of Christ*, I say, (though we have called it *Ours*, because we are Ministers and Preachers of it) *for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*; and *ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake*.

IN this Text there are *Two Things* to be considered and explained.

I. *THE Account which the Apostle gives of what himself and Timothy preach'd,*
viz.

2 Cor. v. 20.

viz. not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.

II. How they considered, and how they behaved themselves in this their Ministry, viz. as the Servants of the Church for Christ's Sake; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake.

FIRST, The Account of what *Paul* and *Timothy* preached (and which no doubt was true also of all the other Apostles, and Christian Ministers in those times) is, that they preached *not themselves*, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*; which may refer, to the *Authority* by which they preached—to the *Doctrines* which they preached—and to their *Aim* and *Design* in preaching; for in respect to all, and each of these, they *preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*.

1. *IN respect to Authority and Power*, they preached *not themselves*, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*; that is, not themselves, but Christ, as the *Sovereign* and only *Lord* of Faith and religious Practice. They did not set up themselves as *Lords over God's Heritage*; nor did they pretend to have any *Dominion* over the Faith of their Fellow-Christians; as this Apostle had told them before, Chap. i. 24. *Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are Helpers of your Joy.* They did

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did not assume to themselves an Authority and Power of dictating to the Consciences of any Men, either as to what they should believe, or what they should *do*; but they only preached and declared to them the Mind and Will of Christ, as they had received it from him; even the *Doctrines* which he had, either preached himself while he was on Earth, or which he had since revealed by his Spirit, and the *Duties* which he, as Lord and King of his own Church, had prescribed to the Members of it. As the *Jewish Law* is called, the *Law of Moses*, because he, as God's Minister, delivered it to *Israel*, though he did not enact one single Precept of it himself; it was all God's Law, and by *his* Authority, not that of *Moses*, was it bound on the Consciences of the People; so *Paul* and *Timothy* call the *Gospel*, *Our Gospel*, as being Christ's Ministers to preach and publish it; That was all. They utterly disclaim all Authority and Power of their own, to prescribe one Word of Faith, or religious Duty. Perhaps this may be the *primary Sense* of our Text, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus THE LORD*, and the only Lord of the Faith and Consciences of Men. You call me *Master and Lord*, said our Saviour to his Disciples (*διδάσκαλον καὶ κύριον* your *Doctor or Teacher*, and your *Master*,) and ye say well, for

for so I am^b; but be not ye Masters; for one is your Master, even Christ^c. Even Apostles must not presume to teach any Doctrines of their own, and to prescribe any Rules of Duty to the Church by their own Authority; for one is your Master, even Christ: And if inspired Apostles might not do this, surely none else may. I disallow the Authority of Popes and Councils, and of all the Men in the World, to make one Article of a Creed for me; for Christ Jesus is the only Lord of Faith and Conscience. Let not our Faith stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God^d. I greatly honour the Memory of Luther and Calvin, and other eminent Lights, which God has raised up in his Church; but I will take no Doctrines of Religion on Trust from any Man; I will believe no Articles of Faith because Luther or Calvin believed them; but because Christ has taught them in his Word. Let Synods and Councils decree as they please; let the civil Governors establish what Articles of Faith, and what Forms of Worship they please; One is my Master, even Christ; We preach not ourselves, nor do we own any Men else, but Christ Jesus to be our Lord: He is the only Lord of Faith and Conscience. Again further.

2. THEIR

^b Joh. xiii. 13. ^c Matt. xxiii. 10. ^d 1 Cor. ii. 5.

2. THEIR preaching Christ Jesus and *not themselves*, may respect the subject Matter of their preaching, or the *Doctrine* which they preached; for they preached all about Christ. *I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, says this Apostle *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Christ was interwoven with every Thread of their Discourses. If we may judge of the Sermons they preached, by the Abstracts which we have of some of them, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and by their *Epistles* to the Churches which are still extant, *Christ* is the Theme, and he is the Person they were continually speaking of, *not themselves*; and by far the greater Part of what they said and wrote, was something or other about Christ. As about his *Nature*, that he is *God manifest in the Flesh*^c, and *all the Fullness of the God-head dwelleth in him*^f. That he is the *great God of Nature and Providence*, by whom *all things were created*, who was before all things, and by whom *all things consist*^e. They also insisted largely on his *mediatorial Office* and *Character*; They preached him as *Christ*, as *Jesus*, and as *Lord*.

As *CHRIST*, or *Messiah*. We find it was a common Theme of their publick Discourses, in those Days, to prove that

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^c 1 Tim. iii. 16. ^f Col. ii. 9. ^e Col. i. 16, 17.

this Jesus was the Christ, who had been so much, and so long, promised, and prophesied of, and typified under the former Dispensations. This was the main Subject of St. Peter's first Sermon, after the Commencement of the Gospel Dispensation, by which *three thousand Souls* were converted in one Day^h. And this was a Topic which St. Paul insisted much upon, where ever he went and preached; for we read, Acts xvii. 2, 3. that *Paul, as his Manner was, went into the Synagogue of the Jews at Theffalonica, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ.* This was the Subject of Stephen's Discourse before the Council at Jerusalem, which gained him the Crown of Martyrdomⁱ. And the same Topic is largely handled in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. Probably there might be Occasion to insist somewhat oftener, and more copiously, on this Subject in those Days than now, after it has been so fully and abundantly proved already, by the concurring Testimony of Prophecies and Miracles. Well, they preached him as *Christ*, the promised *Messiah*, and the *Anointed of God*. Again,

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THEY

^h Acts ii.

ⁱ Acts vii.

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THEY preached him as JESUS, *the Saviour*, (for so the Name *Jesus* signifies.) They went and declared to the World, that he came into it on purpose *to save sinners*. They largely unfolded the Design of his mediatorial Undertaking; as that it was to *reconcile Sinners to God*, to *justify guilty and ungodly Men*, and to *purify* their polluted Natures, to fit them for Heaven, and to bring them thither: That for this End he became a *Propitiation for their Sins*, *that through Faith in his Blood, they might obtain Remission*^k; and that *he gave himself for us, to redeem us from all Iniquity*^l. I find them also explaining, and expatiating upon, the *Covenant of Grace*, which was confirmed with, and by Christ: They declare the *Blessings* which that Covenant promises to all that truly believe in *Jesus*; such as *Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification*, *Union and Communication with Christ, Grace and eternal Glory, through his Suretiship and Purchase*. These and such like Subjects, all about *Christ, his Nature, his Person, and his Offices*, were the reigning *Themes* of the Apostles Sermons and Writings. These were their darling Subjects, some or other of which occur in almost every Page of their Epistles. Again,
THEY

^k Rom. iii. 25.

^l Titus ii. 14.

THEY preached Jesus Christ as LORD. They set him forth in their preaching to be a King as well as a Saviour. They declare his Laws and Statutes, and most earnestly press the conscientious Observance of them upon all his Disciples. I observe that in that very Epistle to the *Corinthians* where St. Paul had declared that he would know, or preach *nothing but Christ, and him crucified*^m, he spends some whole Chapters in explaining, recommending, and pressing moral and religious Duties. It is a mistaken Notion, therefore, that *preaching Christ* is nothing else but preaching about his Person, and Offices, and the Doctrines concerning him, and the Privileges to be obtained by him. It is plain St. Paul meant this Phrase, *preaching Christ*, in a much larger Sense; for in his own Preaching he inculcated all practical Duties. He delivered the Laws and Commandments of *Messiah the Prince*, as well as the Doctrines and Promises of *Jesus the Saviour*. But then there was this, which was always peculiar to the Apostles Discourses about moral Duties, and which did effectually distinguish them from the Discourses of *Plato*, or *Seneca*, or any of the *Heathen Moralists*, viz. that they had a constant Reference to *Christ*; and their Motives, even to *moral and social Duties*,

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ⁿ 1 Cor. ii 2.

Duties, were chiefly taken from his Grace and Love, and our Obligations to him. They led their Hearers to depend on the *Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*, for *Ability* to perform every Duty; and on the Merits and Righteousness of Christ, for their *Acceptance* in all they did. I will here give you one Instance, out of a great many, of the Apostles Reference to *Christ* in their preaching upon moral Duties. It is in *Titus* iii. 2. where we have this negative Precept, *To speak evil of no man*. I rather choose this, because I find it remarked, in a very celebrated Sermon upon that Text, by a learned *Bishop* of great Name, that *there is not one Word of Jesus Christ in this Text*, which he mentions as an Apology, for his having said nothing of Christ in the Sermon; "but I hope (says the Bishop) that " Jesus Christ is truly preached, whenever " his Will, and Laws, and the Duties en- " joined by the Christian Religion, are in- " cultated upon us". But now, if *by preaching and inculcating the Laws of Christ*, nothing else is meant, but *preaching and inculcating the same moral Duties that Christ has commanded us*, but yet without any *special Regard* to him; then, I think it must be allowed, that *Seneca* and *Plato*, and all the Heathen Moralists preached Christ,

as

^a Vid. *Tillotson's Works*, Fol. Ed. Vol. i. p. 503.

as well as *Paul* and *Peter*, and the rest of the *Apostles*: But, in Reality, there was *this* that effectually distinguished these *Christian Preachers*, from those *Heathen Declaimers*, that whenever *they* preached, even on moral Duties, they had a constant Regard to *Christ*; and though they did not wholly decline the Use of mere moral Arguments, and such as the Light of Reason might suggest; yet they seem to have made it a general Rule, to press all Duties with some of the Motives that were peculiar to Christianity. As to what the *Bishop* says, that *there is not one Word of Jesus Christ in this Text*; I suppose by *this Text*, he must mean *this Verse*; but it should have been remembered, that the Division of the *Bible* into *Verses* is a mere human Contrivance; and that it was long since the *Apostles Days*, that *this Text* was thus separated from its *Context*. If the *good Bishop* had read on, he would have found that *St. Paul* presses even *this Duty* by Motives that are peculiarly *Christian*. He builds his Exhortation on the Grace of *Christ*. *Put them in mind*—*to speak evil of no Man*—*for we ourselves were sometimes foolish*, and wicked. *But after that the Kindness and Love of God our Saviour toward Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness which ye have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing*

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life. Now is there nothing of Jesus Christ in this Text? Surely there is a great deal. This one Instance may shew you, as well as a hundred, how, and in what Manner, the Apostles, and first Preachers of the Gospel, preached Jesus Christ as *Lord*; or how they inculcated the Laws and Precepts of Christ; and what it was that distinguished their Discourses, on moral Subjects, from those of the Heathen Moralists.

THUS you see the Apostles preached Christ, as *Christ* the Messiah, as *Jesus* the Saviour, and as *Lord* and King of his Church.

ANY common Reader of the New Testament may see, that *Christ* was the chief Subject of their Preaching, throughout all their Sermons, and Epistles. *His Praise* was their Theme, and not *their own*. From the brief History we have, in the Book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, of St. Paul's Life and Labours, and Sufferings, and Ministry, and his Successes, and the Miracles; which he wrought, One may easily judge, that the Account of these Things might have been swelled into a much larger, and very enter-

entertaining Volume ; and St. Paul might certainly have entertained his Hearers with these Matters, concerning *himself*, and have been heard with Wonder and Pleasure ; and, by this Means, how might he have raised his *own Reputation* and Character where ever he came. But *Christ* was always his Theme. How little does he speak of *himself* ! and when he does mention any thing of that Sort, it is plainly with a View to the Honour of Christ, by whose *Grace* and *Power* he had been supported in his Labours and Sufferings, and his Ministry had been so wonderfully succeeded.

IN this Sense then, *Paul* and *Timothy*, and the other Apostles and Preachers of those times, *preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*

I HINTED still another Sense in which they preached *not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*, and that is,

3. *AS to their Aim and Design in preaching*, which was not to serve their *own Ends* and *Interests*, but *those of Christ* ; not to raise their *own Reputation*, but *Christ's Honour* ; not to gain the *Applauses* of the *People* to *themselves*, but to win them to *Christ* ; not to *amass Worldly Wealth*, and *raise Estates* by their *Ministry*, but to *serve the Souls of Men*, and to *raise eternal Monuments to the Glory of the Power and Riches*.

Riches of the Grace of Christ. All the Portion they proposed, or desired for themselves, as to this World, was, that *they who preach the Gospel might live of the Gospel*^o. They had no Notion of living in *Pomp and Grandeur*; They had no Projects of *making their Families, and raising their Fortunes by their Ministry*. A bare Support was all they wanted, and all that they desired. The *Profits* of their Ministry, which they had set their Hearts upon, were quite of another Sort; It was not saving and laying up *Money*, but saving *Souls*: This was what they most earnestly coveted; and for this they laboured, and *travelled in Birth*, as it were, even to see *Christ formed in the Hearts* of those to whom they preached^p. They looked for their Reward in another World, where they hoped the Converts made by their Ministry would be *their Glory and Joy*^q. In a Word, they sought to advance the *spiritual Interest* of Christ's Kingdom, not the *temporal Interest* of themselves, and their Relations. St. Paul was well satisfied to be *poor in this World*, while he made others *rich in Faith*, and he thought it a gainful Bargain. And as to Reputation and Applause, they were mortified to that also, and could *pass through evil Report, and good Report*, with much the same holy Indifference and Serenity of Soul.

St.

^o 1 Cor. ix. 14. ^p Gal. iv. 19. ^q 1 Thess. ii. 20.

St. Paul was a learned Man, and a great Master of Eloquence; yet so far was he from employing his Talent that way to make himself admired and applauded, that he purposely avoided all Rhetorical Ornaments, in his preaching the Gospel of Christ; and delivered it with the greatest *Simplicity* and *Plainness*, for fear the Minds of the People should be diverted from a Regard to Christ, by their Admiration of the Preacher's Eloquence; and also for fear that the Success of his Preaching should be attributed to the *Charms* of his Oratory, rather than to the *Power* of the Spirit of Christ. Thus he tells the *Corinthians*, *My Speech and my Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*. In short, his whole Aim and Business was to recommend Christ, to win over the Peoples Hearts to an Admiration and Love of Him, and to a sincere Faith in Him; and therefore he carefully avoided every thing that might tend to divert their Attention another Way; as to point it to himself, and to the Charms of his own Eloquence, instead of Christ. For his own Part, he desired to be overlooked and forgot, as it were, that Christ might be wholly regarded: He would have no Part of the

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Admiration of his Hearers terminate on himself, but all on *Christ*. How different a Preacher was St. Paul from some of our admired Pulpit Orators! We need not wonder that the Success of their Ministry falls so much short of his.

THAT is not always the best Sermon which is most admired; nor is he always the best Preacher who is most applauded. There is an excellent Paragraph in *Bishop Burnet's Pastoral Care*, which so clearly illustrates the Point I am now upon, that I will take Liberty to transcribe it. He is cautioning against a vain Ostentation of Eloquence in preaching. "All (says he) must
" be grave, when one would persuade:
" Such an Eloquence as makes the Hearers
" look grave, and as it were out of Coun-
" tenance, is the properest. That which
" makes them look lively, and smile upon
" one another, may be pretty, but it only
" tickles the Imagination, and pleases the
" Ear; whereas that which goes to the
" Heart, and wounds it, makes the Hearer
" rather look down, and turn his Thoughts
" inward, upon himself: For it is certain
" that a Sermon, the Conclusion whereof
" makes the Auditory look pleased, and
" sets them a talking one with another,
" was either not right spoken, or not right
" heard;

“ heard ; it has been fine, and has probably delighted the Congregation, rather than edified it. But that Sermon which makes every one go away silent and grave, and hastening to be alone, to meditate or pray over the Matter of it in secret, has had its true Effect.”

Now such were St. Paul’s Sermons, and such was the happy Effect of them ; He used not the *enticing Word’s of Man’s Wisdom*, for his whole Design was, to recommend not *himself*, but *Christ*.

Thus did the Apostles, and other Christian Ministers, in those times, *preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*. And such was the Preaching that was followed with the greatest Success, and which did the greatest Wonders that were ever done by any Preaching in the World. It converted Sinners by *Hundreds* and by *Thousands* ; it softened the hardest Hearts ; it brought down the proudest Thoughts ; it turned *Scorners* into *Believers*, and the vilest Sinners into *Saints*. This preaching of Christ crucified, though it was to the *Jews a Stumbling-block, and to the Greeks Foolishness*, yet in Fact it appeared to be the *mighty Power of God*^t, even the Means by which the Power of his Grace, in converting and saving Sinners, was most wonderfully displayed and

glorified. And is there not too much Reason to apprehend, that the little Success of Multitudes of Sermons now a Days, may be owing to this, That *Christ is not preached*, or however, *not as he was* by the Apostles and the first Christian Ministers. How seldom do we hear so much as the *Name of Christ*, or any of his *Titles* and *Characters* in some of our fashionable Sermons? And are *moral Duties* now generally pressed with those Arguments and Motives which the Apostles continually made use of? Such as are taken from the *Authority*, *Grace* and *Love* of *Christ*. I cannot but suspect that the present Decay of Religion, and the so general want of Success of our modern Preaching, is, not a little, owing to the different *Strain* of Preaching which is now grown *fashionable*, from that which was formerly so wonderfully *successful*. Alas! how little do Multitudes of the common People of *England* know of *Christ*! may not *one Reason* be, because they hear so little of him.

I HAVE now dispatched the first Part of my Text and Subject, *viz.* the Account which is here given of what *Paul* and *Timothy* preached, *not themselves*, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*.

I proceed to the

SECOND

SECOND Part, where we find how they *considered*, and *behaved* themselves in their Ministry, *viz.* as *Servants* of the Church for *Jesus Sake*.

IT was the highest of their Ambition, and the Top of the Preferment which they expected and desired in the Church on Earth, to *serve* its Interest, to be serviceable to the Souls of those to whom they ministered; and thereby also to serve and promote the Interest and Honour of Christ, their great Master and Lord. *Paul a Servant of Jesus Christ*, was the grandest Title he ever affected; or *an Apostle*, which signifies much the same thing; that is, a *Messenger*, or *one sent* by him. Now there is no other way in which our glorified Redeemer in Heaven, can be served by us here, but by our serving *his Church, which is his Body*. He is above all *personal* Need of any Service from us, and Capacity of being served by us; if we would serve *Christ*, therefore, we must serve *his Body* upon Earth; we must labour to serve and promote *that Cause* which is so dear to him, *that Cause* for which he was once humbled, and suffered, and died in our World; that is, the Interest and Cause of the Glory of God, in the Salvation of sinful Men. This is the best Way of our *returning* the Kindness of our Lord and Saviour, we must serve *his Church*, and

and endeavour all we can to bring Subjects into his *Kingdom*, and this we must do for *Jesus Sake*.

THIS is a Duty in some Measure incumbent on all Christ's Disciples: And his Love will constrain all those, that have felt the Power of it upon their own Hearts, thus to *live unto him*. But *Ministers* are, in a more especial Manner, appointed by Christ to serve in this Affair, and there is some *peculiar Service* incumbent upon them.

ALMOST all the Titles which are given them in the New Testament speak them to be *Servants*: They import not *lothful Dignity*, but *laborious Service*. *Ministers* are called *Pastors* or *Shepherds*, which supposes a constant tender Care in looking to, feeding or instructing, and watching over and guarding the Flocks that are committed to them. Are they *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*? A *Steward* is but an upper *Servant* in a great Family; and he has a great deal of *Business* to do, if he will approve himself faithful. Are they *Ambassadors for Christ*? (A Title in which some Men have very much prided themselves;) an *Ambassador* is but a *Servant* of his Prince and Country. *Ministers* are also called *Watchmen*; such as used formerly to stand on high Towers, whose *Business* was to give Notice of the Approach of an *Enemy*, or other

other Danger, and to sound the Alarm to the City which they watched for; These Men were obliged to constant Attendance, and they must be continually looking out; for if the City was surprized through their Neglect, they forfeited their own Lives. They are also called *Labourers in God's Vineyard, and Husbandry*; and *Soldiers* who must have Courage and endure Hardness, in fighting against the Powers of Darkness. Such are the Titles of Honour which the Scripture gives to Ministers of the Gospel. They all amount to no more than *Servants*; *Servants of Christ, and your Servants for Jesus Sake*. *Popes, Cardinals, &c.* are sounding Titles in the *Rolls of Antichrist*; but they are nowhere to be found in the *Records of Scripture*. Christ's Ministers are *Servants, his Servants, and yours*; and they are ambitious of no higher Honour than to serve his Interest, and the Cause of your Salvation.

WAS it my Province to address immediately to my *worthy Brother*, who is this Day solemnly devoting himself to the Service of Christ, and your Souls, I might take Occasion from hence to lay his Duty before him in a Variety of Particulars. I would earnestly recommend to him *Humility and Diligence, Faithfulness and Zeal, in his ministerial Work and Labours*. I would

24. *Christian Preaching;*

would exhort him to be ever ready to stoop to the meanest Services, by which he may promote the spiritual Interest of any Souls, let them be never so poor and mean in the World. I would exhort *him*, and my *Reverend Brethren* here present, and my *own Soul*, to spare no Pains, nor be discouraged at any Difficulties that may attend this Service. I would tell them of the glorious Reward which Christ has promised his Servants in another World; *They shall be unto God a sweet Savour of Christ in them that are saved, and also in them that perish*^u, when it is not through their Neglect. But this is not so properly my Province. This Part of the Service of this Day is reserved for another Hand. But let me address myself to you, my Friends, of this Church and Congregation, and to all that attend on our Ministry, in one Place and another. I am confident I may speak to you in the Name of my *worthy Brother*, and of *all my Brethren*, and tell you, without a Compliment, we are *your Servants for Jesus Sake*. Let me tell you then, *In what* your Ministers are ready, and would be glad to serve you—*How and by what Means* they propose to serve you—*And for what Reason* they would do so. It is *for Jesus Sake*.

I. I WILL

^u 2 Cor. ii. 15.

I. I WILL tell you in what Matters your Ministers are ready, and would be glad to serve you. It is chiefly in your spiritual Concerns, and your immortal Interest. Not but that they would be ready to serve you in any other Affairs, as they have Opportunity and Power; as all Friends and Neighbours should be ready to serve one another. But their proper Service and Business, as *Ministers*, relates to your Souls, and your spiritual Interest. And, indeed, I am much of Opinion that, ordinarily, Ministers do best to confine themselves, as much as may be, to this their proper Business. It is possible they may sometimes serve their Friends and People in other Matters: Ministers are sometimes applied to, to make up Differences among their Friends; and no doubt but this is a good Work, *Blessed are the Peace-makers*^w. But yet I somewhat question whether it is often very prudent for Ministers to meddle in the temporal Concerns of their People, even so far as to arbitrate Affairs, and make up Differences among them. That is none of a Minister's proper Business; his appointed Service is of another Sort. These Affairs may as well, and I believe generally better, be left to other Persons, who are more skilled in worldly Affairs than Ministers

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^w Matt. v. 9.

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commonly are. And, besides, I have often known, that when a Minister has endeavoured to serve his Friends by arbitrating and reconciling Differences, He has not pleased both Sides: One or the other is offended, and by that Means, very likely, his Usefulness, as to the offended Party, is very much obstructed, and prevented for the time to come. So that, upon the whole, though we would be ready and willing to serve you in any Matter, yet I do not see we can have much Opportunity of serving you in any of your temporal Affairs: That is not the Service you are to expect from us; and I hope you will not expect it from your Ministers, nor *put* them upon it. But there are other Matters, of much greater Moment than all these, in which we are most heartily *your Servants for Jesus Sake*; in which we hope we may serve you, and shall be extremely glad to do so. These are, as I said before, your spiritual Interests, and those most important Concerns of your eternal Salvation. In all these Matters we are *your Servants*. For Instance,

1. *WE are most ready, and should greatly rejoice, to serve any of you in your Conversion.* Could we do any thing to help any unregenerate Persons out of their natural State of Sin and Danger and Misery, might we be directed to drop one serious Word that should

should awaken any careless Sinner, and revive a Soul that is dead in Trespasses and Sins; would the good Spirit of God be pleased to honour our Labours with his efficacious Blessing; so that you might be *begotten and born again* by the Gospel we preach, that you might be *recovered out of the Snare of the Devil*, and become the *Children of God, by Faith in Jesus Christ*; that you might be saved from Damnation and Hell, and be made *Heirs* through Grace of eternal Life and Glory in Heaven; How happy would you be! and how happy should we reckon ourselves to be any way the Instruments of so good a Work, and so great a Benefit to you! *He which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall bide a Multitude of Sins*². Are there any of you here present who are, as yet, in a natural unconverted State? O Sirs! we pity you at our very Hearts, tho' alas you do not pity yourselves. We are, in some Measure, sensible of your Danger, which you yourselves are not aware of; for the God of this World hath blinded your Minds³, and he hides your Danger from you. Our Hearts even bleed for your precious Souls. Oh could we help you out of this dangerous, this miserable Condition;

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² James v. 20. ³ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

could we help to bring you into *the glorious Liberty, and happy Condition of the Children of God*, believe it, my Friends (we speak in good Earnest, and I know my Brethren here concur with me in telling you) we would serve you to the utmost of our Capacity and Power: We would serve you with our Instructions, and Persuasions, and with our Prayers, and Tears. We would *beseech you*, upon our very Knees, O could we but prevail with you! to be *reconciled unto God*, to *fly from the Wrath to come*, to accept of Christ, and a glorious Salvation. In this Service we should reckon our *Success* a most ample *Reward*. If you have any Love for your Ministers, let us serve you. If you have any Love to yourselves, and your own Souls, let our Service, in this Matter, be acceptable unto you.

2. *WE would most readily serve you, in ministering Comfort to you in your Sorrows and Distresses.* We do not pretend to any *Dominion over your Faith*, but gladly would we be *Helpers of your Joy*². Might we be so happy as to speak a *Word in Season* to him that is weary, to revive the dejected and drooping Soul: Might we minister to you the strong Consolations of the Gospel of Christ, the encouraging Invitations, and the gracious Promises of it, to relieve you from

your

² 2 Cor. i. 24.

your Distresses and Fears; It would be a most pleasurable Service to us, as well as unto you. We should be glad to help you to go on your Way rejoicing. Can we comfort you from our own Experience? Can we minister to you those Consolations, *wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God^a*! In this, we are your Servants for Jesus, and your Souls Sake. Will you be so free as to impart your Sorrows, and Fears, and Distresses to your Ministers, as far as it may be prudent? Possibly we might serve you; and we would be most ready and glad to do it.

3. *We are ready to serve you in building up your Souls for Heaven.* Ministers are called *Builders*, in the Scripture: The Apostles were the Master Builders, 1 Cor. iii. 18. *According to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise Master Builder, I have laid the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon.* Their Service and Work is, not only to *lay the Foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God^b*; that is, to labour for the Conversion of Sinners; but also, after that, to help to build them up in Knowledge, Grace and Holiness, and to improve them in their Meetness for Heaven. Now, can we inform you of any thing that may be useful for

for you to know? Can we direct you how to escape the Dangers of your Way? Can we encourage you to your Work and Warfare? Can we help, any Way, to improve the Divine Life in your Souls? To blow up the Fire of Heavenly Love into a brighter Flame, by any thing we can say, or do? In this also we are, most sincerely, your Servants. Again,

4. *We would serve you in your Preparation for Death*, that awful and important Remove, which your Souls must shortly make out of these Bodies, and from this World, into another and eternal State. Next to being in a *safe State*, it is of mighty Importance to be in a *prepared Frame* for dying: As by having our Evidences for Heaven clear and ready; by having our Hearts well *weaned* from this World, which we are then to leave, and *carried out* towards Heaven, which we are then going to; by having our Faith and Patience in a strong and lively Exercise, that we may bear the mortal Agonies, in a Manner that becomes those who are the *Expectants of the better Hope*; and by having our Wills so intirely resigned to the Will of God, that we may contentedly, and even cheerfully, submit to whatever the appointed Manner, or Time of our Death shall be. *Be ye also ready*, is an Exhortation

tion of very great Moment, which Christ has given you in his Gospel. Well, and can *We* serve you in this Matter? Can we assist you in *making your Calling and Election sure*? Perhaps we may: May it please the good Spirit of God to smile upon our Labours for this Purpose. We produce to you the Scripture Characters of the *Children of God*, and the Scripture Evidences of *Adoption*; that you may examine, and try yourselves by them. We often remind you of Death, that you may not forget it; and we give you the best Directions we can, to prepare for it. Can we, further, serve you when you come to die? Can we minister any Consolations to you on your dying Beds? Shall we, at least, join with you in Prayer, to recommend your departing Souls into the Hands of Christ? In all these, and such like Matters, *we are your Servants*, and you may command us. Shall I now tell you,

II. *HOW, and by what Means, we do propose, and would endeavour to serve you. They are such as these.*

I. *We labour to serve you in our Studies; and we give ourselves to Reading, and Meditation, for your Sakes. We endeavour to search out the Mind and Will of God, in his Word, that we may apprise you of it, and*

and bring you acquainted with it: And we study to find out *acceptable Words*, as the *Preacher* did of old, in which we may best clothe the Instructions we are to deliver to you. I do not mean the *enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*: *Florishes of Rhetoric* are *mere Trifles*, nay and worse than *Trifles*, when we are speaking to Men about such grave and serious Matters, as the everlasting Concerns of their Souls. A Minister's Labour and Care should rather be, to find out *plain Words* and *Phrases*, by which he may speak intelligibly to the Capacity of the meanest of his Hearers, whose Souls are as precious as the most polite and learned; and even *that* is often a Matter of no little Difficulty. If any of you think that Ministers live rare easy idle Lives, as having, ordinarily, but one Day's Work in a Week; I will assure you, you are very much mistaken. Faithful Ministers are labouring *daily* to serve your Souls: They have a great deal to do for you at *home*, as well as in the *Pulpit*. A great deal of Reading and Study is necessary to prepare for their publick Work, and in order to suit their Discourses to the Case and Circumstances of their Hearers, that they may do their Souls Good by them: And I am satisfied none of you are fully apprised, of the Labour there is in hard Study, the

vast

vast Expence of Spirits, and the Fatigue it brings upon the Mind, but such as have known it by Experience. However, were it *Ten times more*, and had we Strength to go through it, we would not think much of it, but still we should be glad to serve you.

2. *We labour to serve you in our publick Ministrations, by dispensing to you the everlasting Gospel, and breaking to you the Bread of Life.* We do not boast to you of our Labours; alas! we know we have Reason to be humbled that they are no more, and no better, for Christ and for your Souls Sake: but yet suffer me to say, they are not light nor easy. We *find*, we *feel*, it is with great Propriety, that Ministers are called *Labourers in God's Vineyard*. Few Ministers, who are hearty and zealous in their Work, live to be very old Men: Here and there one it may be, of a stronger Constitution than ordinary; but it is a common Observation, that diligent Ministers seldom live to be old. The Lamp of Life spends apace, by hard Study and Preaching: However, may we but serve your Souls, we are well content; we are willing to, *spend, and be spent* in this Service. O! may we but *save ourselves, and them that bear us*; That will be a great Comfort to us at Death, let Death come when it will.

3. *WE* are most ready to serve you, not only in our Studies, and in the Pulpit, but also at your own Houses; as by visiting you in your Sickneses, and Seasons of Sorrow; and whenever else our Visits may be useful to you. Indeed, as for common Visits, of mere Civility, they are great Wasters of precious Time. Sometimes we are glad of a little Relaxation from our Studies, such as a friendly Visit may afford us; and it is a Pleasure to your Ministers to visit you in Friendship, as often as they can, without neglecting their proper ministerial Service, and oftener I hope you will not expect it, nor desire it. But can we serve you, in any Part of our ministerial Work, by attending you at your own Houses? I would say to the Poor, as well as to the Rich, *we are your Servants*, and you may command us at any time, to do your Souls Good. We would serve you not only *publickly*, but *from House to House*.

4. *WE* endeavour to serve you by praying for you. I suppose there is no faithful Minister, but can say to the *Church*, and *Congregation* that he ordinarily ministers to, what St. Paul says to the *Romans*. *God is my Witness, that without ceasing, I make Mention of you always in my Prayers*⁴. We do not forget you, when we are not among you;

⁴ Rom. i. 9.

you; but we remember you in our most serious Hours, and we use our best Interest for you at the Throne of Grace. We are *striving for you in our Prayers*, begging that God would attend our Ministrations to you with his Blessing; that so you may be profited by them; that *you* may be *saved* and come to the Knowledge of Truth; that *you* may be *blessed*, and built up in your holy Faith; and that *we* may meet you with Joy, at the Right-hand of Christ, in the great Day.

WELL, these are some of the Means, by which your Ministers endeavour to *serve* you, *viz.* By their *Studies*—By their *Preaching*—By their *Visits*—And by their *Prayers*. I am once more,

III. TO tell you the Reason why we are thus your Servants; why we are most ready to serve you; nay, and are desirous of serving you. It is for Christ's Sake. Ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake—For Jesus Sake, who has served before us, and set us a fair Example to copy after—for the Sake of Jesus, who has ordered and commanded us so to do—Jesus, who has so remarkably served our Interest, and whose Interest we would therefore gladly serve—and who has promised us an ample and glorious Reward, of this our Service for your Souls.

1. IN this Matter we endeavour to copy after the Example, which Jesus our Master and Lord hath set us: for he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister^c. He took upon him the Form of a Servant^f. And how incessantly did he labour, and how much did he suffer to save the Souls of Men! With what Zeal did he, not only improve, but seek out Opportunities of doing Good to Souls! by instructing the Ignorant, and warning the Careless and Secure; and declaring to All, both the Terrors of God's Wrath, and the Riches of his Grace and Love. He went up and down doing Good. The Temple, and the Synagogues, and the Parlours of his Friends, nay Fields and Mountains, the Ships in which he sailed, and the Roads on which he travelled, every Place, and every Company were Witnesses to his Zeal and Diligence in this Service. How did he thirst after the Salvation of Souls? The Conversion of Sinners was the Pleasure of the Lord. How did he rejoice in Spirit, when he beheld any poor Captives of Satan rescued by Sovereign Grace; and the Image of God renewed upon any of the fallen Race of Adam, even though they were but as Babes^g; that is, weak and mean Persons, such as were but of little Account in the World, in Comparison with many others.

^a Matt. xx. 28. ^f Phil. ii. 7. ^g Luke x. 21.

others. On the other Hand, how did the Unbelief and Perverseness of those Sinners, who would not accept of his Salvation, wound his very Heart! He would fain have gathered them, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings; he would have protected them from the Wrath to come, and would have made them blessed and happy for ever, but *they would not*^h. The Tears he shed over the Impenitent Jews, who hated him, and persecuted him to the Death; and the *Prayer* which he put up for their Pardon, when he was dying on the Cross, to which their Malice had nailed him, did most abundantly testify his deep Concern for their Souls, and his earnest Desire for their everlasting Salvation. And as Christ has set his Ministers a Pattern of *Zeal* and *Diligence*; so, likewise, of *Humility* and *Condescension*, in their Service for the Souls of Men. He never slighted the Souls of the Poor, any more than the Rich; nor did he at any time disdain the meanest Company, when it gave him an Opportunity of serving their immortal Interest. *Publicans* and *Sinners*, the very Dregs of the People, were as welcome to attend his Divine Lessons, as *Rulers* and *Princes*. It was on purpose to teach his *Apostles* and *Ministers*, how ready they should

should be to stoop to the meanest Offices, whereby they might serve others, especially for their spiritual Good, that himself condescended to that low Office of a menial Servant, the *washing his Disciples Feet*; for he expressly proposed it to their Imitation; *do*, says he, *as I have done unto you*¹; that is, think nothing too mean, whereby you can serve Mens spiritual Interest: Willingly descend to the lowest Offices of Charity for the Good of precious Souls. Now, *the Disciple must not be above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord*². We then, as Disciples and Ministers of Christ, are *your Servants for Jesus Sake*.

2. ANOTHER Reason why we are ready to serve you, is because Christ has ordered and commanded us so to do. He that put us into the Ministry, has appointed Work and Service for us, not Sloth and State; and he has bid us give Diligence, that we may fulfil our Ministry. He has commanded us to condescend to Men of low Estate³. He has enjoined us, to preach his Word, to be instant, in Season, and out of Season, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine⁴. Whoever consults the Rules and Directions that are given to Ministers, in the New Testa-

¹ John xiii. 15. ² Matt. x. 24. ³ Rom. xii. 16.
⁴ 2 Tim. iv. 2.

Testament, especially in the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, will see, that Christ hath appointed them to *serve*, and that, with much Labour and Diligence. We, are therefore, *your Servants for Jesus Sake*, who hath so commanded us; and to whom we must give an Account of our Ministry another Day.

3. *ANOTHER Reason why we are desirous of serving your spiritual Interest is, because in so doing, we shall serve the Interest of Jesus, our Saviour, who has done, and suffered so much to serve our Interest.* Every Convert we gain, is a Subject added to his Kingdom: Every Soul that we are instrumental in saving, will be an eternal Monument, raised to the Honour of the Riches and Power of his Grace and Love. So that if we are Lovers of *Christ*, we must needs be Lovers of *Souls*. *Christ* cannot be precious to us, but your Souls must be so too. We are, therefore, *your Servants for Jesus Sake*; *Jesus*, our dearest Friend, and Saviour, who loved us, and gave himself for us; *Jesus*, who freely submitted to be made a Curse for us, that we might inherit a Blessing; who died for us, that we might live together with him; and humbled himself to the Cross and Grave, that we might be advanced to Heaven and Glory.

4. *A further Reason why we are your Servants, for your Souls Good, is, because Jesus has promised us an ample and glorious Reward.* Though we should have no Reward for our Service from Men, still we are your Servants; for we are sure that Christ, our heavenly Master, will not forget our Work and Labour of Love. Therefore we will gladly serve you, for Jesus Sake. And I may add, we would do it for your Sakes, whom we love as our Friends; and also for our own Souls Sake; that you and we may have a joyful Meeting together in a better World.

Thus, my Friends, you have heard, how we expect, and desire to be considered and treated by you; only as your Servants for Jesus Sake, and for your Souls Good. There is no better Respect you can shew to your Ministers, nothing which they will take so kindly as this, Only, let them serve you. Do you but profit by their Labours, that is their most comfortable Reward of all. We rejoice to serve you; do not therefore be afraid of giving us Trouble, in any thing whereby we can serve your best Interest. I have sometimes been grieved, when I have been sent for to dying Persons, poor ignorant Creatures, it may be, and now just upon the Point of expiring, when there is hardly an Opportunity of so much as speaking a Word to them;

and Ministerial Service. 41

them; I have asked their Friends why they did not send for me sooner; The Answer has been, *They were loth to give me the Trouble.* I assure you, Sirs, we think it no Trouble to serve your Souls, either in publick, or in private. It is, (I hope I may say it is) I am sure, *it should be*, our Pleasure so to do. Let us but serve you in these Matters, let us serve your highest, your immortal Interest; It will be the best Encouragement you can give us. And the good Success of our Labours, for the Service of your Souls, will be a most endearing Bond of our mutual Love, and Friendship with you. Then you will be as *our Epistles of Commendation* from Christ, *written in our Hearts;* You will be dear unto us, as our *beloved Sons*, whom we have begotten in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel; you will be in our Hearts to live and to die, in the Service of your Faith, to spend and be spent for you. And if we are faithful and profitable Servants to you, we doubt not but you will love and value us as such; and farther than so, we have no Claim to your Love: Nay, if we are not faithful to your Souls, we deserve no Respect, nor Value at all. O may we obtain *Mercy of the Lord to be faithful, and able Ministers of the New Testament;* and may you be taught to profit by our Ministry, so shall we joy and rejoice with you all. We

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A CHARGE

42 Christian Preaching, &c.

that we have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain; and you that you have not heard, and believed in vain. We that sow, and you that reap, shall gather Fruit together unto Life eternal. We shall be the *Helpers* of your Joy, and you shall be our *Crown* of rejoicing, in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his Coming; to whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen.



A CHARGE



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CHARGE

Delivered at the

ORDINATION

Of the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN JENNINGS.

My dear Friend and Brother,

 DOUBT not but your own Sagacity has prevented me in observing, that the Discourse we have been just now hearing is in Effect a *Charge*, though with great Dexterity couched under the Form of a popular Address. Your general Work has been well represented to you,

and you have been instructed as to the Authority by which you are to act in it, the Subject on which you are chiefly to insist, and the End which you are to pursue. The particular Offices in which you are to endeavour to serve Christ, in serving the Souls of Men, have also been happily touched upon ; and the grand Arguments which should engage you to attend this Service, with Diligence, Resolution and Delight, have been powerfully suggested. It would therefore be easy for me to go over all the most natural Branches of it, in an Application of it to you, by which I might well answer the whole Purpose of the Province particularly assigned to me, in the Work of this Day. But lest by such a Repetition I should seem unseasonably sparing of my own Labour, as well as a Sense of my Inability to express these things in a more agreeable Manner, than that in which they have already been handled, I shall now attempt a Method something different ; only observing, that the Hints I am now to address to you will appear with some peculiar Advantage, when considered in their Connection with the preceding Discourse.

I AM willing to believe, Sir, that in Consequence of what my reverend Brother has been laying before you, your Heart is now glowing with a vigorous, yet humble

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Resolution, that, in the Divine Strength, you will emulate the Character and Conduct of the great Apostle, and will *preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord*; and that you will be ready to approve yourself *the Servant*, the lowly affectionate Servant, of the meanest of your Brethren *for his Sake*. I will suppose your Enquiry to be, How may I serve this great Master in the most acceptable and successful Manner? How may I conduct myself, so as another Day to hear him saying to me, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter into the Joy of thy Lord*^a? I know not how to answer such an Enquiry better, in a few Words, than to remind you of another lively and proper Expression of the same Apostle St. *Paul*, when speaking of the blessed God he says, *I serve him with my Spirit in the Gospel of his Son*^b. You serve God in the same Gospel.—I hope it will indeed be the same.—God forbid we should any of us introduce any other. Labour therefore to do it *with your Spirit*, with all the united Powers of your Soul, and labour at all times to keep your Spirit in a proper Situation for it.

FOR your Assistance in this Respect, I shall make it my present Business to shew you, as well as I can, what must be the Situa-

^a Matt. xxv. 21.

^b Rom. i. 9.

Situation and Temper of that Spirit, which would, in the happiest Manner, serve Christ in the great Work you have this Day undertaken. This will give me an Opportunity of suggesting Hints which will have their Use, not in this or that particular Respect alone, but in every Circumstance through which you pass, and in every Service to which you are called out, *that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished and prepared to every good Work*. Nor can I think of any thing which appears to me a more proper Supplement to the many particular Advices I have given you, with regard to your Business as a Preacher and a Pastor, in those Academical Lectures on that Subject which you have heard from me, and the Hints of which are still in your Hand. Permit me now to remind you that they come recommended to you by a very material Circumstance, as several important Passages in them were taken from the Lectures of *my honoured Tutor* your reverend and worthy Father; whose Name will long be precious in the Churches, and my Relation to whom I must always esteem as, under God, one of the greatest Blessings of my Life. You will no doubt frequently review them, and pardon me if I say, you will in Effect hear *two Fathers* speaking in them, with

with a united Voice; if the most endearing Affection, and the most intimate Converse, even from your infant Years, can give me a Title to that tender Name.

If you desire to serve Christ with your Spirit in his Gospel, I confess you undertake a difficult Task. So difficult, that were there not a much better Spirit than our own, in the Strength of which we attempt it, even *the Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*^d himself, I know not how any of us could encourage our younger Brethren, or how we could find any Encouragement ourselves, in the midst of so many Infirmitie, Temptations, and Oppositions. But at once exhorting you, my dear Son, to be strong in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus^e; and praying, as the Apostle expresses it, that *the Lord Jesus Christ may be with your Spirit*^f, I proceed to give you some Hints, as to that Frame and Temper in which it must be your Busines, and mine, to preserve our Spirits, if we desire they may be fit for so great a Service. And my younger Brethren who hear me this Day, of which there is so large an Appearance, will I hope consider a great deal of what is now to be said, as their own Concern as well as ours, and lay it up in their Memories, as against their own Ordination-Day. Not to say how much

^d Phil. i. 19. ^e 2 Tim. ii. 1. ^f 2 Tim. iv. 22.

Christian is obliged, on the common Principles of Religion, to cultivate the main Branches of the Temper I am to recommend. Now, with respect to this, I may indeed say as *Solomon* does, *Keep thine Heart with all Keeping* ; below the utmost Attention upon it, and let every thing be done that can be imagined, with any Appearance of Propriety, in Subserviency to so great an End. May it be your constant Care, and the grand, noble Point of your Ambition, to have *a Mind as well ordered as possible*. So that no one irregular Affection may be admitted or encouraged, no one good Affection wanting or languid. But the general Exhortation may farther be illustrated in such Particulars as these which I shall touch upon, not as exhausting the Subject, but as containing some of the most material Instances of Watchfulness and Duty, to which it may lead.

Be solicitous, my dear Friend, if you would serve God with your Spirit in the Gospel of his Son, that your Spirit be habitually devout—and humble—that it be elevated and free—that it be attentive, and active—that it be courageous and resolute—that it be tender and gentle.

1. LET it be your Care that your Spirit be evangelically devout; that it be set upon God;

¶ Prov. iv. 23.

upon God in Christ. He is your Master, and you are always in his Sight, labour to act as continually in it. converse much with him and you will lose him the more, and, by a very natural Consequence, you will serve him the better. Labour after the Knowledge of the divine Being, so far as feeble Mortals can attain it. And see to it that it be a practical Knowledge, affecting your Heart with those powerful Emotions of Reverence and Love, due to the great Father of the World, and to your God and Father in Christ. Know and honour him under the various Views in which he appears by the Light of Nature and Revelation, realizing to your own Mind continually, his Existence and his Presence—“ O my Soul, there is a God, and such a God as I discourse of to others—and he is this Day, this Moment, present with me, and observing what REGARD I will shew him, and what EFFECT all the Discoveries he has made of his Greatness and Goodness will have upon my Mind and my Life!”

LET this engage you to make *Devotion* a considerable Part of your Business, and to attend to it as such. You will often be speaking to God, in the Name and Presence of others; and a REGARD to your own Reputation will engage you then to address

150 *A CHARGE delivered at the
dress him, in a solemn, reverend, com-
posed and affectionate Manner. It will
engage you to awaken and regulate your
Thoughts, while employed in social Prayer,
which indeed seems to me by far the most
difficult Part of our publick Work, as per-
formed in such Assemblies as ours. But
surely that Minister has great Reason to
suspect the Integrity of his own Heart that
can pray with some Copiousness, Affection
and Pleasure with others, and in secret
can only find in his Heart to run over a
few hasty, inattentive and customary Words,
in such a Manner as he would be ashamed
to do, if any one of his Fellow-creatures
was present. Guard against this, my dear
Brother; and especially guard against it in
the Evening, when the Fatigues arising
from the Labour of the Day, may expose
you to peculiar Danger of it. And for
that Purpose take time to retire, if possible,
before the Fatigue becomes too great and
sensible, that there may be Flame for the
Evening-sacrifice. Be assured, that as Prayer
is the Food and Breath of all practical Re-
ligion, if I may be allowed the Expression,
so secret Prayer in particular is of vast Im-
portance; insomuch that I verily believe
that if a Man were to keep a particular and
accurate Journal of his own Heart but for
one Month, he would find as real and
exact*

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exact a Correspondency between the Temper of his Soul at Seasons of secret Devotion, and in other Parts of his Life, as we find between the Changes of the Barometer, and of the Weather.

To furnish out Matter for Prayer, let Meditation be called in to your Assistance; and let the Word of God, above all, be the Subject of your Meditation. You know it is placed among the most distinguishing Characters of a good Man, that *his Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night*^h. Various Matter of Prayer may by this Means be suggested, and the Soul brought into a proper Frame for pouring out itself before God. Observe in what Channel the Devotion of *David* and *Asaph* ran in the Old Testament, and that of *Paul*, *John*, and the other Apostles under the New, and, above all, that of our great Lord; and labour, with Allowances for the Difference of Circumstances, to have your Heart affected with Divine Things, as theirs seem to have been.

LABOUR not not only to breathe out this Temper before God in the Seasons of solemn devout Retirement, for which you will do well to have your Hours and your Plan, to be, if possible, strictly and resolute-

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^h *Psal. i. 2.*

ly observed, but also endeavour to carry it along with you into the World : And be lifting up your Heart to God, in many of those little Vacancies of Time, which often hang on the Hands even of the busiest of Mankind, but might this way be profitably employed. Why should you, for several Hours together, be in the Presence of such a Master, and such a Friend, without speaking one Word to him ? Or why should any of his most affectionate Servants, in former Ages, have addressed him with a Devotion warmer and more constant than yours ? If this Advice be observed, you will also be glad to have an occasional Errand to the Throne of Grace, will be heartily glad to sweeten the Hours of friendly Conversation, by making them subservient to Communion with God. It will glad you often to conclude your Visits with Prayer, and chearfully to come into any Scheme of seeking God in a more solemn and express Manner, on any particular Emergencies that may arise relating to yourself and Friends; as also to encourage, what we commonly call, private Meetings for social Prayer at stated Times, which, so far as I can judge, greatly promote a Minister's Usefulness, and which are generally kept up with the greater Spirit, and
the

the best Order, when he accustoms himself to be often present at them.

BUT permit me, Sir, before I dismiss this Head, to remind you, that it is *evangelical Devotion* I am recommending: A Devotion in which a due Regard is habitually maintained, to the Love and Grace of Christ, and to the Influence of his good Spirit. Indeed one would think, if a Man believed the Gospel, his Devotions should naturally and unavoidably take this Turn. Would to God we find it so; nevertheless this I may confidently say, so far as Reason and Experience can justify a Confidence in saying any thing, that very much will depend upon turning our Thoughts into the Channel to which the Gospel has directed them, and viewing things in the Light in which that has placed them. No Devotion so sweet, and none so lasting as that which is thus guided and animated. Remember it is the **GOSPEL** in which you are serving him; and you can never serve him so effectually, as by a close and constant Attendance to it. Keep your Heart therefore full of those Impressions, which it will naturally introduce into an attentive Mind. Think what a Friend the blessed **Jesus** has been to you, and how much you are, and must for ever be indebted to his **Life** and **Death**, his **Resurrection** and **Ascension**,

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cenison, his Guardianship and Intercession.
And when this View grows daily familiar
to your own Soul, your Heart will teach
your Mouth; and add this best kind of Know-
ledge to your Lips: So that you will be in
no Danger of starving or destroying the
Souls of your Hearers, as I fear many who
should be Ministers of the Gospel do, by a
criminal and fatal Silence upon these Heads;
And this will happily influence you to all
Humility of Spirit in the Service of Christ;
for nothing has so great a Tendency to
humble the Soul, as the Sight and converse
of the blessed and glorious Jehovah, in
whose Presence we are *less than nothing*,
and Vanity: Especially when we consider
ourselves as introduced to him by the Blood
of Christ; and formed and animated by
his own Spirit, in every thing which is
pleasing, in every thing which is not of-
fensive to him. Pride, my dear Brother,
is one of the most subtle, and one of the
most dangerous Enemies that you will en-
counter with, in the whole Course of your
Christian and Ministerial Warfare. It is at
once astonishing and grievous, to think un-
der how many specious Forms it insinuates
itself into the very Sanctuary of God, and
hides itself, if I may be allowed the Ex-
pression, even under the Vestments of those
A man holding a book and a pen who

who serve at his Altar; indeed frustrating its own most darling End, and exposing them at once to the Displeasure of God, and, to what they seem yet more to fear, the Contempt of Men. ¹¹ You must therefore continually and constantly guard against it; and make it one of the chief Cares of your Life, not only to suppress its Growth, but to root it out of your Soul.

If you would be honourable in the Sight of the Lord whom you serve, you must be humble; and that Humility must be seated, not merely in the external Behaviour, but in the Heart. A small Degree of common Sense may be sufficient to preserve a Man from the ridiculous Folly of making Eneomiums upon himself, and his own Performances; or from the Madness of putting on imperious Airs in common Life, which is indeed no other than bespeaking the Scorn and Aversion of all about us. I had almost said, a manly Pride will set a Minister above these things, and teach him to curb every Appearance of them. But our Humility should dwell in our very Souls: And I am well persuaded the greatest and the best of Men may find enough in themselves to nourish it from Day to Day. When I think, for Instance, what the Man and the Minister, in the most perfect View of his Character, ought to be,

in

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in Comparison with what I myself am ! When I look about on all the Negligences and Irregularities of my Life ; when I look in especially on all the Folly and Corruption of my Heart ; and farther recollect, that all these things are open to the Eyes of God, who sees what I am, and what I have done, in Comparison with what I should have been, and should have done ; in Comparison to what I might have been, and might have done, for his Glory, and the Good of Mankind, if all my Capacities, and all my Opportunities had been improved to the highest possible Degree ! what Reason do I find for the deepest Abasement in the Divine Presence ? What Reason to abhor, rather than applaud myself ; to hide my Head with conscious Blushes, rather than to lift it up in a haughty and supercilious Manner, as if I had *whereof to glory* before God or Man ? It is not a Freedom from gross Matter of Reproach among Men, no nor some distinguishing Share of Genius, of Learning, of Eloquence, of Reputation and Popularity, that will raise a Man's Esteem for himself, when such Views as these are made familiar to the Mind. He will apprehend it to be, at least a supposable, and indeed a very probable Case, that many, who, in these things, and in the Eye of the World, are his Inferiors, may, on Account

count of their better Temper and Conduct, be, in the Eyes of God, far superior to him; and may be fitted for much more distinguished Honours in that World which is to fix our Rank for ever: And we shall certainly find it very much for our own Ease and Comfort in Life, thus to esteem others better than ourselves, in Honour preferring one another^k. When we do not look upon any distinguishing Regards as our Due, if we miss them we shall not be much disappointed, and if they meet us, we shall think ourselves obliged to the World for its kind Partiality in our Favour; and behave so much the more humbly, while we endeavour indeed to be, what they are so kind as to think we are: And thus, in more Senses than one, it will be prudent for him, *who would be the greatest, to be the least and Servant of all*^l. Our blessed Redeemer is such an Example of this amiable Temper, that nothing in the World illustrates the natural Pride and Corruption of the human Heart more, than that this Lesson is so little learnt and practised, by those who call themselves his Disciples, and even his Ministers.

3. LET it be your Concern to preserve a due *Freedom and Elevation of Spirit*. I join these together, as being nearly of a-kin,

^k Phil. ii. 3. Rom. xii. 10. ^l Mark x. 44.

CHARGE delivered at the
and the latter only a superior Degree of the
former. And therefore when I mention
Liberty of Mind, you will apprehend I in-
tend not only, or chiefly, what the World
calls Freedom of Sentiment. You have
long since been taught to indulge that, and
have I hope taken your Religion from the
Word of God, and not from any human
System or Composition whatever. Go on
to act upon this Maxim. I dare not say,
like St. Paul, *continue in the things thou
hast learnt, and been assured of by me, know-
ing of whom thou hast learned them.* It ra-
ther becomes me to say, Examine all I
have taught you, and *search the Scriptures
daily whether these things are so or no^m.* You
will not, I am persuaded, run the Matter
to Extremes, and imagine, like some Half-
thinkers, that Liberty consists in boldly
daring to decide against received Opinions,
as soon as some new Difficulties are dis-
cerned; and confidently venting raw and
undigested Notions, however noxious, with-
out fearing any of the Consequences. And
while you guard against this, I am not so
conscious of the Weakness of any Cause
in which I am embarked, as to fear it should
be brought to the Test of strict Enquiry.
But this Enquiry, how well soever guarded

^m 2 Tim. iii. 14.

and

and regulated, is not the Whole that I mean by Freedom. I intend something much nobler and greater; something which many who boast loudly of their Liberty are entirely ignorant of. I mean a Freedom from all undue Attachments to every thing that would debase and enslave the Mind, and render a Man the ignominious *Servant of Corruption.*

If Paul thought it proper to say to *Timothy*, *Keep thyself pure, and flee youthful Lusts*¹, the Admonition cannot be unseasonable to any who are early in Life entering on the Ministry. And indeed, if, after so many Years spent in the Apostolick Office, he represented it as a daily Labour of his Life, to *keep under his Body, and bring it into Subjection*²; we may reasonably conclude, that the most advanced Servants of Christ had need to be cautious on this Head; had need, while they dwell in an animal Body, to *watch and pray, that they enter not into Temptation*³. Especially considering that some of the Excesses to which unguarded Appetite may betray a Man, are of such a Nature, as to fix a lasting Stain upon his Character. A Minister especially may, in one single Hour, incur a Reproach,

¹ 1 Tim. v. 22. ² 2 Tim. ii. 22. ³ 1 Cor. iii. 27. ⁴ Matt. xxvi. 41.

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which past and future Years of the strictest Temperance shall not be able to avert, remove, or efface. Yet I cannot but say, that to a Person in whom the Habits of a temperate and regular Life are formed, I apprehend the *Passions* to be much more dangerous Enemies than the Appetites; and especially those Excesses of the Passions which are generally, among virtuous and worthy Men, reckoned weak rather than infamous. By these has many a wise and good Man been miserably enslaved, and fallen far beneath the Dignity of his Character and Office; not to mention the unhappy Consequences they have often drawn after them, with respect to the Ease, and Comfort of future Life.

WISDOM is not indeed intended to root out the Passions, but she seldom dwells in the Heart in which they are suffered to grow wild. They turn the Soul into a Desert, and render it a disagreeable Abode to so divine a Guest; or rather, to speak in Language more becoming a Christian Divine, the blessed Spirit of God is by this Means driven away, and it is impossible to say how much the evil Spirit may sometimes do, in his Absence, to irritate our Minds and drive them into the most fatal Extremes. It must therefore be of great Importance

portance to keep a resolute Guard on these turbulent Subjects, and to check the first rising of Sedition among them; lest they gather Strength by insensible Degrees, and break out into such open Rebellion, as to depose Reason and Religion from the Throne, reducing the Soul into a State of Anarchy; or rather making its noble rational Powers the Slaves of those, whom they were formed to command.

To be secure from all the Danger, and all the Appearances of so great an Evil, let it be your Care, Sir, to maintain a becoming Elevation of Spirit, and to fill your Mind with sublime Ideas, Principles and Views. This the Christian Religion naturally suggests to all its Votaries, and above all to its Ministers. Think, what a Master you serve, and in what a Work you are engaged! Think how little all the Titles which the Princes of this World can give must appear, when compared with that of the Minister of Jesus, and a Servant of God in the Salvation of Souls. Think how low the Employments of secular Life are, even those in which the Nobles and Kings of the Earth are engaged, in Comparison with yours. In this Respect, it is good to *magnify our Office*^q; not as if it gave us any

^q Rom. xi. 13.

the

the least Power to tyrannize over our Brethren, to invade their Liberty of Thinking, or of acting, or to command their Properties in any Degree. Secular Power seems too inconsiderable a Thing for our Master to give to Servants, whom he has set so high in his Family, and intends for a Charge so much greater and more important, in which the Exercise of that would necessarily interrupt them. We are appointed to be, in Subordination to Christ, the Friends, the Guardians, the Deliverers of Souls; and if our Labour succeeds, the Effect is EVERLASTING. All the Productions of human Art and Industry shall perish; the Palaces and Citadels which it raises shall moulder back to Dust, and be levelled with the Earth; the mightiest Nations, whose Interests divide the Globe, shall soon be blended together, and distinguished no more. But every Soul whom we recover to Christ and to Holiness, will be an everlasting Monument of the Power of Divine Grace, and of our Fidelity to our Master's Service; will be an Honour and Delight to us, ten thousand thousand thousand Years after the Earth itself has been removed out of its Place. Think and act like one that has such grand Schemes in View; like one who is continually realizing to himself the Presence

sence of God, and the Prospect of Immortality, and has learnt by them not an affected and counterfeited, but a real Contempt for the Pleasures and Interests of this perishing State; like one who has learnt heartily to pity those whom mistaken Mortals imagine the Objects of Congratulation, or of Envy.

4. LET it be your constant Care to keep your Spirit *attentive and active*.

THE great Employments and Views in which you are engaged, should, methinks, effectually engage you to this. Since the Work is so grand, and to be carried on in the Midst of so much Opposition, as you well know is to be expected from the Indispositions and Corruptions of our own Hearts, and the Influence of so subtle and so powerful an Enemy as the Prince of Darkness is, you will naturally apprehend that many Difficulties and Obstructions will arise; so that you had need exercise an habitual Prudence, both to guard against Temptations, and to seize Opportunities, precious but transient Opportunities, which perhaps if they are once suffered to slip by, may never return. "Bright
" as the heavenly World appears to my
" View and my Hopes," says an eminent
Christian in one of his Letters, " I am
" some-

“ sometimes afraid of going shither, till I
“ have done something considerable for
“ the Service of Christ upon Earth.” Me-
thinks such a Thought as this, while the
Uncertainty of human Life is remembered,
should engage us to a Watchfulness of Soul,
should lead us every Hour to recollect,
“ What can I do for my great and glori-
“ ous Master? What can I do for him im-
“ mediately? Supposing this should be the
“ very last Day I have to spend in his Ser-
“ vice, how may he find me employed
“ in a Manner that will be most acceptable
“ to him?”

LABOUR, in this View, to do Good every
Day, and every Day to do as much Good
as possible; and if any thing can conveni-
ently be done To-day, defer it not, by any
Means, till To-morrow. To-morrow is
God's, and not yours; and if it come, and
find you here in a Capacity of Service, it
will so far *take Thought for the Things of*
itself, that whatever you can do To-day,
there will be Business enough remain, for
that, and for the next Day too, and for all
the Days and Hours God shall assign you.
Therefore, Sir, guard not only against a sloth-
ful and inactive Temper, but against unne-
cessary Delay. Here are certain Duties so

Matt. vii. ult.

appa-

apparently great and important, that Satan himself has not the Assurance so much as to propose it to us, that we should come to a Resolution, that we will always omit them. All he will demand is, that you would this Day wait for a more convenient Opportunity, and continue waiting To-morrow, and so on for one Day more, till he can find you no more Excuse for further Procrastination. And it is by this Artifice, palpable as it is, that he enervates the Usefulness of the greater Part of Christians; that he makes their Life but a Shadow of what it might be, and sinks them into so insignificant a kind of Being, that one would imagine a rational Soul should be continually upbraiding itself with its own Importance, while its noble Furniture and Capacity is employed to such low Purposes; and instead of acting, is only dreaming first of one Vanity, and then of another; always intending to be wise and useful hereafter; but not allowing itself so much as to say when. I have always observed that those Tradesmen who are most solicitous to execute their Orders immediately, give the greatest Satisfaction to others, and generally improve their own Stock best. But alas, *the Children of this World*¹ are, in this Respect, and almost every other,

¹ Luke xvi. 8.

A CHARGE delivered at the
wiser than the Children of Light. I would
only add, that as growing Years will na-
turally impair the Activity of the Spirits, it
will be your Wisdom, while you are young,
to accustom yourself to Vigour and Dis-
patch, that so the Force of Habit in riper
Years may be some Equivalent for the Want
of the Vivacity which will then, in the
Course of Nature, be diminished. And I
really think Activity and Cheerfulness to be
so nearly allied, that one can hardly take
a more effectual Method to secure the latter,
than to cultivate the former. Especially
when, as in the present Instance, it is em-
ployed to sow the Seed of an immortal
Harvest, which will be rich and glorious,
in Proportion to our present Diligence and
Zeal.

5. IN order to this Activity, it will be ne-
cessary to see to it, that your Spirit is
maintained in a *courageous and a resolute*
Temper.

THE Difficulty and Obstructions which I
hinted under the former Head, will render
this necessary, and necessary in Proportion
to your Diligence: Just as the Resistance
of any dense Fluid, through which a Body
is moved, acts more forcibly, in Proportion
to the Velocity with which the Body is im-
pelled. You must therefore lay your Ac-
count

count thus; the Ministry is not an easy Employment; it will not always go on smoothly; many Entanglements will arise, even from the Pleasantness of our Circumstances, from the Kindness of our Friends, many of whose Importunities we must break through, if we desire to improve our Time well, and to pursue the Business in which we are engaged; and in the Execution of some Part of it, other and greater Difficulties must be expected. It is possible you may not be able faithfully to discharge your Duty without greatly disobliging some whom you respect and love; some on whom your temporal Circumstances may very much depend. Perhaps you may be obliged, in Conscience, to bear a publick Testimony against their Errors, or against their Irregularities, and it may be against both, as they are frequent Companions: Or at least you may be obliged plainly to admonish them in private, and expostulate with them in a Manner that they may not be disposed to bear; even after all the most prudent Address on your Side to make it as inoffensive as is consistent with Fidelity. Nor is it impossible that in consequence of some distant and unforeseen Change in publick Affairs, you may be called forth even to Martyrdom, and obliged either

to resist to Blood, or to make Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience. An heroick Resolution must therefore be put on, that in the Strength of Christ you will be *faithful to the Death*^t; that your Master may be pleased, whoever is displeased, and that your Crown of Glory may be secure, whatever else is lost. And it will be the Part of Christian Prudence sometimes to exercise a voluntary Self-denial, in smaller Matters, that it may become easier to you in Circumstances of considerable Difficulty, Importance and Necessity. But while you are setting your Face like a Flint in the Midst of all the most violent and forcible Opposition.

6. LET this Courage and Resolution be tempered with a becoming Degree of *Tenderness and Gentleness*.

LABOUR to preserve your Mind continually under the Influences of Benevolence and Love. Remember you serve the most benevolent of Masters, in the most benevolent of Works. The whole Business of your Life is *to do Good*, and therefore, to make that Business easy, cultivate Love; for the Labours of Love are easy Labours, and are indeed no other than their own Reward.

^t Rev. ii. 10.

INDULGE

INDULGE to a continued Sensibility of Heart. Be willing to look upon the Sorrows of others, and to feel them, and live continually mindful of the common Tie of Brotherhood and of Kind. Look upon the human Family as one, and then do all you can to make it an orderly and happy Family. Especially cultivate Love and Compassion to the Souls of Men. Seriously think what an immortal Soul is, and to what extreme Danger the Souls of Multitudes are exposed. Think also in how languid a State Religion is, so far as Actions can discover it, in the Souls of many, concerning whom, Charity would hope that they are not quite estranged from all the Principles of the Divine Life; and long earnestly to bring them into a more healthful State, and to see them lively and active.

UNDER this Head let me recommend to you a tender Love for the *rising Generation*, and particularly for little Children, dear amiable Creatures, who, one would think, should need no Advocate to plead their Cause, with a Person of a humane and generous Disposition. Christ was an Example of condescending Regard to them, and he certainly meant to teach it to us. Learn this Meekness and Lowliness from him.

Converse

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Converse with them, instruct them, and as you are often praying for them, be sometimes praying with them too; and for that Purpose appoint a Number of them at proper Seasons to attend you, and then, when you have talked with them in a free and affectionate Manner about the things of Religion, pray over them, in such easy natural Language as they are most likely to understand, and recommend them to God with that Tenderness of Heart which their Presence will naturally inspire.

I HAVE often observed Numbers of them melt into Tears upon this Occasion; and when that is the Case, it is a Secret Encouragement to hope, that even while we are praying, God hears. And would Parents sometimes try the same Method with their Children, and appoint but a few Minutes every Week to pray with them alone, they might find, as to my certain Knowledge some pious Parents have done, not only that it had a good Tendency to compose and soften the Temper of those little Creatures, but possibly, in some Instances, to give such a Turn to the Mind of those grown up to some Maturity, as might be carried through the Remainder of Life; and fixed upon, as the probable Season from whence

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whence their Conversion to God might take
its first Rise.

WHILE I am on this Head, I must exhort you also, to condescend to the least and weakest, as well as the youngest. Remember you can never stoop so low to others, as Christ has stooped to you; and that, when you have done all, your great Master will exceed you in Condescension, as much as he does in Glory.

LET this Tenderness also engage you to enter into the Sorrows of others; who, says St. Paul, is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? i. e. feel Fire, as it were, kindled in my Bosom, which makes me restless till I have done all, I conveniently can to make him easy. You, Sir, must accustom yourself to bear the Burdens of others, that you may fulfil the Law of Christ, and with greater Advantage teach others to fulfil it. You must not shun the Cottages of the Poor, or the Chambers of the Languishing; nor must your Ear be so intent on the more pleasing Sounds, as to turn away from the Sighs and Groans of the Distressed. You must often be visiting your Brethren, that you may see how they do; and their personal or domestick Afflictions must be tenderly weighed, in their various Circumstances,
that

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that your Heart may feel its Part, and so prompt you to do all you can, if possible, to remove them; or if that be impracticable, as it often will be, at least to alleviate them; and sometimes the Sight and Conversation of a Christian Friend does so much to alleviate them, that one would imagine so cheap a Charity should not be denied. Let not our Master say, in Reference to any of his Servants, *I was sick and ye visited me not*^a; I was confined and ye did not come unto me. You will, I hope, be ready according to your Ability, to relieve the Necessitous: You will also, I hope, improve your Interest among your Christian Friends, to procure that Relief which you cannot immediately give: and be assured that, while thus employed, you are performing a kind Action toward the Rich and the Prosperous, many of whom are so ready to forget the Indigent and Afflicted, that when one thinks upon the great Day of Account, one is ready, as the World generally appears, to congratulate the Poor, and to tremble for the Rich. Let Benevolence to both, therefore, remind you of St. Paul's Words to Timothy, *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded, nor*

^a Matt. xxv. 43.

trust

trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who gives us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life".

AND before I close this Head, I must also beseech you, *by the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ*, that you endeavour to exercise a meek and gentle Temper under Contradiction and Opposition. I hope and believe you will meet with very little of this Sort, from so kind, so generous, and so obliging a People; as that to which you have the Happiness of being related: yet there is no Soil so good, but some Root of Bitterness may spring up in it, and if not among your own People, and among your nearest Brethren in the Ministry; yet among others Injuries may arise: but if you are reviled, revile not again; if you are injured, let Forgiveness be all your Revenge; for it is all Christianity allows, and all that it is good for us to take. And if you should, which is always too supposable a Case, be called out to combat with Error and Immorality, venture to do it in the Spirit of Meekness. It is the Method

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which the God of Truth and Holiness has taught us. *The Servant of the Lord*, says the Apostle, *must not strive, but must be gentle towards all Men, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance*². We must be cautious lest the old Serpent find out a Way of brooding over our Hearts, and diffuse his Venom there, while we mistake the Fermentation it occasions to be only a Warmth of Zeal for Christ, and so do the Work of his Enemy in his Name. I cannot, for my Part, apprehend Satire to be an Ordinance of Christ; at least I believe, he will be more ready to excuse those that have erred on the tender, than on the severe Extreme. The Knowledge I have had of your natural Disposition, prevents my enlarging on this Head, which, with regard to you alone, it might not here have been material to mention: Nevertheless it is a Sin that easily besets young Divines, who, as I suppose, with their Wits and Passions warm about them, have had the chief Hand in bringing *Theological Fury* into a Proverb. As for you, Sir, whatever personal ill Usage you may meet with in Life, *be not overcome with Evil, but overcome*

² 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.

come Evil with Good^y, and trust in him who has given you the Command, to bear you harmless while you are careful to observe it. Goodness will, on the whole, not only be safe, but victorious; and the Wisdom of this and all the other Rules of our great Master, will be demonstrated, not so much by Debate, as by Experience. Go on, therefore, my dear Friend and Brother, not only in this Respect, but in all others, to conduct your Spirits by these, and you will find them your Ornament and Defence. The Satisfaction of a well-governed, and of an acceptable and successful Ministry, will infinitely over-balance all the Pains you can take with your Spirit, to keep it in such a Temper. God will approve the Effect of his Holy Spirit's Agency on your Heart; and when I have said you will be the Object of his Approbation and Delight, it is little to say the happy Fruits of this Care, which will appear in the Sight of your Fellow-creatures, will entitle you to their Veneration and Affection, and gain a Degree of both, which neither the exalted Stations, the most flourishing Circumstances, or the most extensive Genius and Learning, could possibly secure in the Neglect of these

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things.

things. And as there is no Room to doubt but Divine Grace will bless your Labours, while conducted on such Principles, you will be continually laying up in Store new Treasures, to be possessed in the celestial World, among Multitudes whom God will make you an Instrument of bringing on into the Way to it, or of conducting in those peaceful and blissful Paths.

I CONCLUDE with exhorting you, my Friends of this Congregation, to continue your affectionate Regards to my dear Brother, who has now commenced a more intimate Relation to you than before, and is become your Pastor. Never give him Reason to repent that he is so, and that he has preferred you to other Congregations, who would gladly have engaged his Settlement among them. Encourage his valuable Labours by your constant Attendance, and by your friendly Care for his Support: Above all, endeavour to improve in Religion by his Means. I am well satisfied that he *seeks not yours but you*², and will think he *lives* indeed, *if you stand fast in the Lord*³. You will not, I persuade myself, grieve him by any personal Unkindness; God grant that none of you may distress his Soul, by undoing your own!

² 2 Cor. xii. 14. ³ 1 Thess. iii. 8.

own! God grant that none of you may send him back to his great Master with Lamentation, on Account of your refusing to accept of that Message of Pardon and Life he brings! I do indeed *hope better* *Things of you, and Things that accompany* *Salvation*^b; and conclude with my hearty Prayer, that he may rejoice in every Soul of you in the Day of the Lord, *that he has not run in vain, nor laboured in vain*^c. Amen.

^a Heb. vi. 9.

^b Phil. ii. 16.

F I N I S.

E R R A T U M.

Page 7. Line 1. r. Be not ye called Masters.

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